

## Message Text

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AMCONSUL PORT MORESBY

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AMEMBASSY SUVA

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

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FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 083174 ACTION HICOMTERPACIS INFO

USUN CINCPACREP CINCPAC COMTWELVE WHITE HOUSE SECDEF

DEPT OF INTERIOR DTD 11 APR

QTE

UNCLAS STATE 083174

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, TQ

SUBJECT: PRESS RELEASE ON MARIANAS PLEBISCITE

PASS STATUS LNO BERGESON

COMTWELVE FOR AMBASSADOR WILLIAMS

DEFENSE FOR OSD/ISA

WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC

USUN FOR AMBASSADOR WHITE

INTERIOR FOR DOTA

FOLLOWING PRESS RELEASE ISSUED BY SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE APRIL 11, 1975:

QUOTE: SECRETARY MORTON ACTS TO AUTHORIZE PLEBISCITE

- IN THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS FOR JUNE 17, 1975

- SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR ROGERS C.B. MORTON TODAY  
ISSUED A PROCLAMATION CALLING FOR A PLEBISCITE TO BE HELD  
ON TUESDAY, JUNE 17, 1975, IN ORDER THAT THE PEOPLE OF THE  
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS, PRESENTLY ADMINISTERED AS A PART  
OF THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS, MAY DECIDE  
WHETHER THEY WISH TO BECOME A COMMONWEALTH OF THE UNITED  
STATES. THE ISLANDS, INCLUDING SAIPAN, TINIAN, ROTA AND  
OTHERS, LIE NORTH OF THE U.S. TERRITORY OF GUAM.

- ON FEBRUARY 15, 1975, THE MARIANAS POLITICAL STATUS

COMMISSION AND THE PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE,  
AMBASSADOR HAYDN WILLIAMS, SIGNED A COVENANT TO ESTABLISH  
A COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS IN POLITI-  
CAL UNION WITH THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. THE COVE-  
NANT CALLS FOR THE HOLDING OF SUCH A PLEBISCITE. IF THE  
COVENANT IS APPROVED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE MARIANA ISLANDS  
DISTRICT AND SUBSEQUENTLY THE CONGRESS OF THE  
UNITED STATES, THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS WOULD  
BECOME A U.S. COMMONWEALTH.

- IN ANNOUNCING THE PLEBISCITE SECRETARY MORTON STATED,  
"THE PLEBISCITE WILL BE HELD IN A FAIR AND IMPARTIAL  
MANNER UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF A PLEBISCITE COMMISSIONER.  
THE PRESIDENT HAS DESIGNATED MR. ERWIN D. CANHAM, TO SERVE  
IN THAT POSITION AS HIS PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE." SECRE-  
TARY MORTON ALSO DECLARED, "OBSERVERS FROM THE  
UNITED NATIONS AND THE U.S. CONGRESS WILL BE WELCOME TO  
WITNESS THE PLEBISCITE AS WELL AS THE PLEBISCITE EDUCA-  
TION PROGRAM, THE REGISTRATION OF VOTERS, AND OTHER PRE-  
PLEBISCITE ACTIVITIES."

- COMMENTING ON MR. CANHAM'S APPOINTMENT, SECRETARY  
MORTON NOTED HIS LONG AND DISTINGUISHED RECORD OF PUBLIC  
SERVICE INCLUDING A PERIOD AS A UNITED STATES DELEGATE TO  
THE UNITED NATIONS DURING ITS FORMATIVE YEARS, AND EXPRES-  
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SED APPRECIATION FOR HIS WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT THE PRESENT  
APPOINTMENT. MR. CANHAM WAS FOR MANY YEARS EDITOR-IN-  
CHIEF OF THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR AND IS PRESENTLY  
EDITOR EMERITUS. HE HAS PARTICIPATED IN THE WORK OF  
COMMISSIONS CONCERNED WITH PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND HOLDS HONO-  
RARY DEGREES OR CITATIONS FROM SEVERAL AMERICAN UNIVERSI-  
TIES AND FROM THE GOVERNMENTS OF ENGLAND, FRANCE, GREECE,  
GERMANY AND AUSTRIA."

- SECRETARY MORTON ALSO ISSUED A SECRETARIAL ORDER THAT GRANTS THE AUTHORITY AND ESTABLISHES ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE HOLDING OF A PLEBISCITE. THE ACTION CREATES THE PLEBISCITE COMMISSIONER POSITION, OUTLINES THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS ADMINISTRATION, ESTABLISHES A NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS PLEBISCITE ADVISORY COMMITTEE, OUTLINES THE FUNCTION OF A PLEBISCITE EDUCATION PROGRAM, CREATES A VOTER REGISTRATION BOARD, ESTABLISHES VOTER QUALIFICATIONS, AND AUTHORIZES A SPECIAL PLEBISCITE APPELLATE COURT.

- ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS OVER MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS THE PEOPLE OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS HAVE SOUGHT A CLOSE

AND ENDURING ASSOCIATION WITH THE UNITED STATES. SECRETARY MORTON'S ACTION WILL PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THEM TO DECIDE, PURSUANT TO THEIR RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION, WHETHER THEY WISH TO BECOME A COMMONWEALTH IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TERMS OF THE COVENANT. AT LEAST 55 OF THE VALID VOTES CAST IN THE PLEBISCITE MUST FAVOR COMMONWEALTH STATUS BEFORE THE COVENANT IS PRESENTED TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS FOR ITS APPROVAL.

END QUOTE.

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## Message Attributes

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**To:** CANBERRA MULTIPLE  
**Type:** TE  
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